

Members

Rep. Peggy Welch, Chairperson
Rep. Tiny Adams
Rep. Gloria Goeglein
Rep. Matt Whetstone
Sen. Becky Skillman, Vice-Chairperson
Sen. Steven Johnson
Sen. Rose Antich
Sen. Mark Blade
Garland Ferrell
Frank Fritch
Richard Jones
Vernon Jewell
Douglas Lechner
Raymond Lueken
John Catey
Al Dillon
Jean Paul Lushin
Bill Mansard
Richard Dodge



COUNTY GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION

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Authority: P.L. 109-1997

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: October 12, 2000
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington
St., 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 4

Members Present: Rep. Peggy Welch, Chairperson; Rep. Gloria Goeglein; Rep. Matt Whetstone; Sen. Becky Skillman, Vice-Chairperson; Sen. Mark Blade; Garland Ferrell; Richard Jones; Vernon Jewell; Douglas Lechner; Al Dillon; Jean Paul Lushin; Bill Mansard; Richard Dodge.

Members Absent: Rep. Tiny Adams; Sen. Steven Johnson; Sen. Rose Antich; Frank Fritch; Raymond Lueken; John Catey.

Rep. Welch called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Property Tax Assessment by Townships and Counties

Rep. Welch recognized Judy Sharp, President of the County Assessors Association. Ms. Sharp provided an overview of the office of township trustee with assessing duties from

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

the perspective of the county assessor. Ms. Sharp stated that the assessing records of township trustees with assessing duties generally are not computerized, and that most township trustees probably do not have the computer skills necessary to run the assessing programs. Ms. Sharp said that part of the problem also lies in the fact that most township trustees with assessing duties are only part-time.

Ms. Sharp stated that she was speaking for the County Assessor Association and for the Association of Indiana Counties when she called for authority over the assessing process to be placed in the hands of the county assessors. Ms. Sharp discussed the problems caused by township trustees with assessing duties, and the costs to the county of the errors committed by township trustees with assessing duties. The Commission discussed the accountability necessary in the assessment process.

Al Dillon discussed a clarification of remarks he made at a prior Commission meeting regarding the office of township assessor and township trustee with assessing duties. Mr. Dillon pointed out that he did not want to eliminate township assessment, but stated that the law which creates a township assessor should be revised. Mr. Dillon stated that the office of township assessor should be based upon township parcels and not population.

The Commission discussed the issue of township trustees, township trustees with assessing duties, and township assessors.

Rep. Welch recognized Rep. Sue Scholer to discuss COMPETE legislation from the 2000 session of the Indiana General Assembly. Rep. Scholer discussed her legislation regarding regional road authorities, county managers, and placing court costs on a separate levy. Rep. Scholer outlined the concepts of fiscal home rule, and the status of past and potential fiscal home rule legislation. The Commission discussed fiscal home rule.

Rep. Welch recognized Steve Buschmann representing the Indiana Township Association. Mr. Buschmann rebutted claims that township trustees with assessing duties do not want to have assessment duties, and that township trustees with assessing duties have problems because they are "part time." The Commission discussed the work of township trustees with assessing duties. Mr. Buschmann related to the Commission the problems some township trustees have in communications with the county assessor.

Mr. Buschmann pointed out that the percentage of township trustees with assessing duties who are Level 1 or Level 2 assessors has been increasing. The Commission discussed assessor training issues. The Commission discussed HB 1783-1997. Mr. Buschmann promised to provide a memorandum on HB 1783-1997 to the members of the Commission.

Rep. Welch recognized Linda Williams, township trustee, Adams Township, Hamilton County. Ms. Williams discussed the problems with the professional assessor hired to complete assessments, and the errors in her township which she was able to correct. Ms. Williams rejected the idea that as a township trustee she was not aware of the duties of her office prior to election. The Commission discussed the costs of the assessment and the compensation of township trustees with assessing duties.

Rep. Welch recognized William Pipher, township trustee, Bloomfield Township, LaGrange County. The Commission discussed township government structure, and the particular compensation of Mr. Pipher.

The Commission discussed the assessment process, assessing new construction and

problems in collecting assessment data.

Rep. Welch recognized Paul Ricketts, township assessor, Lawrence Township, Marion County. The Commission discussed township assessment and the legislative history and contents of HB 1783-1997.

The Commission continued discussion of assessment.

Preliminary Bill Drafts

Rep. Welch asked the members of the Commission to review several preliminary bill drafts considered by the Commission. The Commission discussed PD 3372 and PD 3373 concerning reauthorization of the Commission and PD 3417 concerning the establishment of corrections districts by local units of government, and offered changes to those drafts. Rep. Welch directed that certain changes be made and that new drafts would be offered at the next meeting for a vote by the Commission.

Other Business and Adjournment

Rep. Welch opened the floor for other business of the Commission, but heard none.

Rep. Welch adjourned the meeting at 12:15 p.m.